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Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung. Eine logische Einleitung in die historischen Wissenschaften. Von Dr. HEINRICH RICKERT, Professor an der Universität Freiburg i. B. Erste Hälfte. Freiburg i. B., und Leipzig, I. C. B. Mohr, 1896.—pp. 304.

We have in this volume the first part of a work which proposes to deal with the relations between natural science and history, and with the mode in which these disciplines treat experience. In this first part, which lies before us, attention is given chiefly to the work of natural science, the object being to show in what way that work is limited; this, however, is subsidiary to the main object which is the vindication of the distinct, specific position of historical science. It is one of the worst evils of modern thought that it has been too much influenced by natural science. The present work is intended to help in counteracting that influence.

The first chapter deals with "the conceptual knowledge of the physical world." That world as presented to us in perception is infinite, extensively and intensively; consequently the attempt to make an exact copy of that world is futile. The work of science is of a different kind; it lies in overcoming this complexity by its system of concepts and laws. Our ordinary general names, by which an indefinite manifold is indicated, show how this process begins. Science consists in simplification, both of the number of objects indicated, and also of the qualitative content. Scientific concepts must be definite, this end being secured not by means of a representative image, but by a series of judgments which can be unfolded in regular order, and of which the essential elements can be raised from the indefinitely complex representative background. In regard to the validity of concepts, we have to note that all science which is not mere empiricism seeks to attain complete generality in its judgments; in other words, to state unconditional laws. No mere arbitrary description can be scientific; so far as a description is more than this, it can be carried out only on the presupposition of universal necessary connection. If, however, science seeks such completely universal statements, does not the conception of 'thing' disappear to make way for that of 'relation'? In answer, it is to be observed that in much of science the concept of definite ultimate things is merely provisional, and is transformed on deeper analysis into that of relation. Only in the highest and most unified form of natural science, do we require to postulate ultimate unanalyzable elements or things. Reference is made to the work of two eminent scientists to show how physical science supports the views here urged from a logical standpoint.

The principles thus found to hold for the science which deals with material bodies are applied in the second chapter to mental science. It is first shown that the true division of sciences is one according to method, not one according to subject-matter. Our knowledge of psychical facts is not more immediate than our knowledge of physical fact. In psychology, again, we find the same simplifying process employed: there is the same necessity of making concepts definite, and of transcending, even in description, the narrow field of individual experience. In psychology, further, we need the hypothesis of ultimate elements, which cannot, any more than atoms, become objects of experience. The quantitative aspect fails here possibly; but then it is not present everywhere in natural science, and indeed is not so much an ultimate factor, as a means towards attaining the end of scientific knowledge, viz., simplification. In the term 'nature,' rightly considered, we find not so much the designation of a certain province, or subject-matter, as the indication of a point of view; reality is looked at from the side of the universal, of law and system. If this be granted, then there need be no hesitation in treating psychology as a natural science.

In the third chapter headed 'Nature and History,' Dr. Rickert inquires: 'What is the attitude of natural science to reality in general?' The answer is that natural science is limited by its inability to reproduce the endlessly complex reality; it is more perfect the more universal its laws, and the less of every-day actuality it includes. This may be said of psychology in spite of the contest of psychological theories; it can be said with more certainty of physical science. Abstract physical science does not depend on presentation or representation any more than abstract mathematical science. In this limit of science, however, is found the opportunity of history; the province of this type of knowledge is the concrete individual, the particular event as defined by space and time, which remains outside the scope of natural science. Wherever interest is concentrated on what is actual with all its endless specific complexity, there we have the working of the historical spirit. History neglects the search for laws, for what is universal. This, however, is not due to the complexity of its phenomena, but to the fact that the historian has no interest in that which is common to many individuals and occurrences. We have here to deal with the opposition, not of being to becoming, but of the concept to reality. Both scientific and historical elements are to be found in the various departments of knowledge, but their presence and coöperation do not destroy their essential independence and difference.

When we ask what is the final worth of this acute and careful investigation, we are hampered by the fact that the main point must perforce be left out of account, viz., the positive conception of historical science. We can only mention in passing the doubt whether there is any place left for history as science. The fundamental thought of the discussion seems to be this: natural science cannot give a copy, *Abbild*, of empirically real experience, therefore all that it does is unreal. This suggests the criticism that the argument involves a misconception of experience and our cognitive relation to it. The absolutely particular event, if such a conception be possible, is an object neither of interest nor of knowledge; only so far as it is recognized as related does it become such an object. Now it is this relative aspect of reality which science seizes and expresses in the form of law and principle. It is not the whole of reality. But even an image copying a detail of experience is not the reality, and can serve only as a more or less useful substitute for it. In giving this version of scientific research, it follows that the importance given by Dr. Rickert to the notion of simplification is disallowed. Simplification is, to put the distinction sharply, an incident rather than an end in scientific discovery. The true investigator welcomes unification as he welcomes differentation. Dr. Rickert allows to the judgment validity (*Geltung*) in place of reality, but gives no further exposition of this concept. This is somewhat unfortunate, for the point is one of the most important in the discussion. Only one more subject can be touched on here. In the final perfect science, as we saw, room was to be left for ultimate elements, "last things." These last things are unchangeable, indivisible, and without different quality. The reason given is that, if they were not so constituted, science could never be perfect; if, for example, there were qualitative variation, then it would be forever impossible for science to be certain that its account was complete, and that no new variation could disturb its system. I cannot see that a science which sincerely accepts the experimental method can make such claims, or that any limit can possibly be set to the complexity and ultimate differences in things. Only from a metaphysical standpoint can such a claim be urged, and for the purposes of science such a claim has hardly more value than that of a suggestion.

W. G. SMITH.

Theories of the Will in the History of Philosophy. By ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898.—pp. viii, 357.